

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for controlling a movable robot comprising a camera, moving means, and a device for outputting a sound, which comprises:

5 means for recognizing a subject to be followed up, which recognizes the subject on the basis of an image taken by the camera;

means for recognizing a distance to from the subject having been recognized by the means for recognizing a subject  
10 to be followed up;

means for controlling movement, which controls said moving means so as to keep the distance from said movable robot to the subject, having been recognized by said means for recognizing a distance to the subject, at a predetermined  
15 distance; and

means for controlling the outputting of a sound, which outputs a sound or a voice related to the distance to the subject.

20 2. The apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said moving means of the movable robot moves by two legs' walking.

25 3. The apparatus according to Claim 1, which further comprises means for holding map information, which holds map information of an area within which said movable robot moves,  
and

wherein said means for controlling movement determines the actuation of said moving means based on the map information held in said means for holding map information.

5       4. The apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein a restricted area which prohibits approach is set in said map information held in said means for holding map information.

10      5. The apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the subject to be followed up is a person, and which further comprises means for judging instruction from a person.

15      6. The apparatus according to Claim 5, wherein said means for judging instruction from a person judges whether or not the robot follows up the person based on the results of recognition in which the person is recognized from the face image.

20      7. The apparatus according to Claim 6, wherein said means for judging instruction from a person judges the instruction from the person based on at least one of posture, and gesture of said person.

25      8. The apparatus according to Claim 5, wherein said means for judging instruction from a person judges the instruction from the person based on a voice vocalized from

said person.

9. The apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said means for controlling the outputting of a sound changes a volume 5 of voice outputted to said device for outputting a sound, based on a circumferential noise level.

10. A process for controlling a movable robot comprising a camera, moving means, and a device for outputting 10 a sound, which comprises:

a step for recognizing a subject to be followed up, which recognizes the subject on the basis of an image taken by the camera;

15 a step for recognizing a distance to the subject having been recognized by the step for recognizing a subject to be followed up;

a step for controlling movement, which controls said moving means so as to keep the distance to the subject having 20 been recognized by said step for recognizing a distance to the subject at a predetermined distance; and

a step for controlling the outputting of a sound, which outputs a sound or a voice related to the distance to the subject.

25 11. A program for controlling a movable robot comprising a camera, moving means, and a device for outputting

a sound; which comprises having a computer to serve as means for recognizing a subject to be followed up, which recognizes the subject on the basis of an image taken by the camera;

5       means for recognizing a distance to the subject having been recognized by the means for recognizing a subject to be followed up;

          means for controlling movement, which controls said moving means so as to keep the distance to the subject having  
10      been recognized by said means for recognizing a distance to the subject at a predetermined distance; and

          means for controlling the outputting of a sound, which outputs a sound or a voice related to the distance to the subject.